



# FACT SHEET

## 310TH SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet

### Mission

The 310<sup>th</sup> SOS operates the U-28A “Draco” to execute worldwide airborne tactical intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) missions. The squadron operates alongside joint and partner special operations forces to counter violent extremist organizations and near peer competitors. The U-28A aircraft, developed around the Pilatus PC-12 airframe, is crewed by four Airmen. The “Draco” is equipped with electro-optical infrared sensors, a robust communications suite, and advanced mission systems to execute intelligence gathering, command and control, humanitarian operations, search and rescue, conventional and special operations missions.



### Background

#### *World War II*

The 310th Special Operations Squadron was originally constituted as the 310th Troop Carrier Squadron on 25 May 1943, later activated on 1 October of the same year. The squadron flew airborne assaults on Normandy, Holland, Germany, as well as aerial transportation missions throughout the European Theater of Operations (ETO). Officially participating in four campaigns within Normandy, Northern France, the Rhineland, and Central Europe, the squadron earned a distinguished Unit Citation for its actions on D-Day, 6 June 1944. After Germany's surrender on 4 May 1945, the 310th transferred to Walter Field, Trinidad, in the British West Indies, where it operated for two additional months before inactivation on 31 July 1945.

#### *Korean War and Nuclear Test Support*

The squadron was reactivated as a reserve unit on 27 June 1949, at Hensley Field, Texas, entering active service on 1 May 1951. The unit then moved to Donaldson AFB, South Carolina, on 9 August 1951, serving there until its second inactivation on 1 February 1953. During this period, it flew the C-46 Commando and C-119 Flying Boxcar aircraft. It was redesignated as the 310th Troop Carrier Squadron (Assault, Rotary Wing) on 16 November 1954, and activated on 8 February 1955, at Pope AFB, North Carolina, operating the H-19 helicopter. The squadron provided support missions for atomic weapons testing in the Eniwetok Atoll until the rotary mission was transferred to the U.S. Army. After the transfer of mission, the squadron was deactivated on 7 September 1956.

#### *Vietnam War*

The unit was reactivated on 24 May 1963, and redesignated as the 310th Troop Carrier Squadron (Assault). It was organized at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, South Vietnam, on 8 July 1963, flying the C-123K Provider and later adding the C-7 Caribou to its inventory. The unit designation changed from Air Command (Special Operations) to Tactical Airlift Squadron during its time in Southeast Asia. The 310th went on to earn three Presidential Unit Citations, seven Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards (AFOUA) with valor, and two Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Crosses with Palms. The 310 TAS was the last tactical airlift unit in Southern Vietnam, participating in seventeen campaigns before inactivation on 15 November 1972.

### *Central and South America*

The 310th remained inactive for more than twelve years before regaining active status at Howard AFB, Republic of Panama, 1 December 1984. The squadron earned an Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamer for its role in Operation JUST CAUSE and added six more AFOUAs to its decoration count. The airmen of the 310<sup>th</sup> SOS flew the C-21A, C-22A, C-27A, CT-43A, and C-130E/H aircraft at Howard AFB. The unit also participated in Operations SUPPORT HOPE, DISTANT HAVEN, SAFE HAVEN/SAFE PASSAGE, and SAFE BORDER. It provided disaster relief airlift assistance throughout Central and South America and notably delivered vital supplies to South Florida after Hurricane Andrew in 1992. The squadron ceased flying operations on 1 January 1999, and its last assigned C-27A, tail number 91-0106, departed Howard for placement into storage at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona, on 13 January 1999. Following the delivery of the C-27A the unit was deactivated, 31 March 1999.

The 310th Airlift Squadron was reactivated, 1 Jan 2001, supporting USSOUTHCOM with one CT-43A and USCENTCOM with one EC-135N; both aircraft were retired 1 September and 3 February 2001 respectively. The unit then received its first of three Gulfstream C-37As on 25 July 2001, with which they supported the seven CONUS-based unified combatant commanders. In 2008, the 310th was honored with the Secretary of Defense's Commander-in-Chiefs Award for Installation Excellence and in 2009, the Gulfstream Aerospace's inaugural Alber-Rowley Trophy for best aircraft and mission utilization. In 2010, the 310th Airlift Squadron (AS) maintained 99% maintenance effectiveness and 100% crew reliability during its 2,665 flight hours. The 310<sup>th</sup> AS was deactivated on 30 September 2019.

### *Special Operations ISR*

The unit was reactivated as a Special Operations Squadron on 30 April 2021, at Cannon Air Force Base, NM. The squadron operates a modified Pilatus PC-12 designated the U-28A as Draco. The mission of Draco is to conduct intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions in support of special operations forces. The 310th is the second U-28A squadron at Cannon AFB operating in worldwide operations consistently since its activation.

### **Lineage**

Activated as the 310 Troop Carrier Squadron, 443 Troop Carrier Group on 1 October 1943; Inactivated on 31 July 1945. Redesignated 310 Troop Carrier Squadron (Medium), 10 May 1949; Activated in the Reserve on 27 June 1949. Ordered to Active Service on 1 May 1951. Inactivated on 1 February 1953. Redesignated 310 Troop Carrier Squadron (Assault, Rotary Wing), 16 November 1954. Activated on 8 February 1955. Inactivated on 7 September 1956. Redesignated 310 Troop Carrier Squadron (Assault) and activated, on 24 May 1963. Organized on 8 July 1963; Redesignated as: 310 Air Commando Squadron (Troop Carrier) on 8 March 1965; Redesignated as: 310 Air Commando Squadron (Tactical Airlift) on 1 August 1967; Redesignated as: 310 Special Operations Squadron on 1 August 1968; Redesignated as: 310 Tactical Airlift Squadron on 1 January 1970. Inactivated on 15 November 1972. Redesignated as: 310 Military Airlift Squadron, and activated, on 1 December 1984. Redesignated as: 310 Airlift Squadron on 1 June 1992. Inactivated on 31 March 1999. Activated on 1 January 2001. Deactivated on 30 September 2019. Redesignated as: 310 Special Operations Squadron: 16 March 2021. Activated on 30 April 2021 until present.

### **Assignments**

443 Troop Carrier Group, 1 October 1943 – 26 April 1944; I Troop Carrier Command, 15 February – 26 April 1944.  
315 Troop Carrier Group 26 April 1944 – 31 July 1945; Eighth Air Force, 21 April 1944 – 31 July 1945.  
443 Troop Carrier Group (Medium), 27 June 1949 -1 February 1953; 443rd Troop Carrier Wing.  
Eighteenth Air Force (attached to 464 Troop Carrier Wing), 8 February 1955 - 7 September 1956.  
315 Troop Carrier (later, 315 Air Commando) Group, 8 July 1963; Pacific Air Forces, 24 May 1963.  
315 Air Commando Wing (later, 315 Special Operations; 315 Tactical Airlift) Wing, 8 March 1966.  
377 Combat Support Group (later, 377 Air Base Wing), 15 January -15 November 1972.  
61 Military Airlift Group, 1 December 1984 – 1 June 1992; CINCSOUTH.  
24 Operations Group, 1 June 1992 – 31 March 1999; 24 Special Operations Wing.  
Twenty-First Air Force, 1 October 1997 - 31 March 1999.  
6 Operations Group, 1 January 2001 - 30 September 2019; 6th Air Refueling Wing.  
27 Special Operations Group, 30 April 2021 – present; 27 Special Operations Wing.

## **Stations**

Sedalia Army Air Field, MO, 1 October 1943; Alliance Army Air Field, NE, 19 January 1944; Camp Mackall, NC, 8 March – 21 April 1944; Spanhoe, England, 21 April 1944 – 6 April 1945; Amiens, France, 6 April - 19 May 1945; Waller Field, Trinidad, 30 May – 31 July 1945; Hensley Field, TX, 27 June 1949; Donaldson Air Force Base, SC, 9 August 1951 – 1 February 1953; Pope Air Force Base, NC, 8 February 1955 - 7 September 1956; Tan Son Nhut Air Field, South Vietnam, 8 July 1963; Nha Trang Airport (later, AB), South Vietnam, 29 June 1965; Phan Rang Air Base, South Vietnam, 14 July 1967; Tan Son Nhut Air Base, South Vietnam, 27 January - 15 November 1972; Howard Air Force Base, Panama, 1 December 1984 – 31 March 1999; MacDill Air Force Base, FL, 1 Jan 2001 – 30 September 2019; Cannon Air Force Base, NM, 30 April 2021 –

## **Operations**

Airborne assaults on Normandy, Holland, and Germany, as well as aerial transportation in European Theater of Operations (ETO), during World War II. Awarded Distinguished Unit Citation (DUC) for service at Normandy, 5 - 6 June 1944. Rotary support for atomic weapons tests (Operation RED WING) on the Bikini and Eniwetok atolls in the Marshall Islands, February - June 1956. Airdrop and airlift to combat forces in Southeast Asia, 1963 –1972; also, vegetation destruction and malaria control flights, August 1970 – June 1972. Awarded Presidential Unit Citations (PUCs) for service in Vietnam, 21 January - 12 May 1968: 1 April - 30 June 1970. Airlift in South and Central America, 1985 – 1999, included the invasion of Panama (Operation Just Cause), December 1989 – January 1990. Airlifted combatant commanders, government, and military official throughout the US and worldwide in support of Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), 2001. During 2013, squadron deployed twice in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. In 2021, personnel and aircraft deployed in support of Operation Inherent Resolve and Operations in the Horn of Africa.

## **Service Streamers**

World War II American Theater. Global War on Terrorism-Service (GWOT-S).

## **Campaign Streamers**

*World War II:* Normandy; Northern France; Rhineland; Central Europe. *Vietnam:* Vietnam Advisory; Vietnam Defensive; Vietnam Air; Vietnam Air Offensive; Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II; Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III; Vietnam Air/Ground; Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV; TET 69/Counteroffensive; Vietnam Summer/Fall, 1969; Vietnam Winter/Spring, 1970; Sanctuary Counteroffensive; Southwest Monsoon; Commando Hunt V; Commando Hunt VI; Commando Hunt VII; Vietnam Ceasefire.

## **Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers**

Panama, 1989 - 1990

## **Decorations**

Distinguished Unit Citations: Normandy, 5-6 June 1944. Presidential Unit Citations: Vietnam, 21 January – 12 May 1968; 1 April – 30 June 1970. Presidential Unit Citation (Navy): Khe Sanh, 20 January – 31 March 1968. Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" Device: [8 July] 1963 – 30 April 1965; 30 June – 9 July 1965; 15 October 1966 – 30 April 1967; 10 June – 31 December 1967; 15 July 1968 – 30 June 1969; 1 January 1971- 26 January 1972; 27 January – 15 November 1972. Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards: 1 December 1984 – 30 June 1986; 1 July 1986 – 30 June 1988; 1 July 1988 – 30 June 1989; 20 December 1989 – 14 February 1991; 11 February 1992 – 31 July 1993; 1 June 1996 – 31 May 1998. Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Crosses with Palm: 22 April 1966 – 1 January 1970; 1 January 1970 – 15 November 1972.

## **Aircraft**

Douglas C-47 (1943 – 1945)

Curtiss C-46 (1949 – 1952)  
Fairchild C-119 (1952 – 1953)  
Sikorsky H-19 (1955 – 1956)  
Fairchild C/UC-123 (1963 – 1972)  
De Havilland C-7 (1972)  
Boeing C-22 (1985 – 1991)  
Lockhead Martin C-130 (1984 – 1996)  
Bombardier Aerospace C-21 (1989 – 1999)  
Alenia C-27 (1991-1999)  
Boeing CT-43 (1992 – 1997, 2001)  
Gulfstream C-37 (2001)  
Boeing EC-135 (2001 – 2002)  
Pilatus PC-12 (2021- present)  
Pilatus U-28A (2021- present)